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SUBJECT: UN independent human rights expert visits DRC

¶1. The UN Human Rights Council's Independent Expert on Human Rights in the DRC, Titinga Frederic Pacere, called for an end to insecurity and impunity at a press briefing following his March 12-14 visit to Kinshasa. He highlighted the lack of judicial capacity and the continuing violation of human rights, including sexual violence, especially in eastern DRC. He also called for the creation of an international court for the DRC to judge and deter human rights violators.

¶2. Pacere's visit included meetings with Interior Minister Denis Kalume, Foreign Affairs Minister Mbusa Nyamwisi, Justice and Human Rights Minister Mutombo Bukafwa, and the Defense Minister Chikez Diemu. He also met with SRSG Alan Doss, UN agency chiefs, foreign diplomats, representatives of human rights advocacy organizations, and civil society groups working to combat sexual violence. He expressed concern about the human rights situation in the DRC and the prevalence of insecurity, especially in the east.

¶3. Pacere deplored the existence of "lawless" areas without state authority where there may be no courts within a 300 km radius. He called for an end to impunity through "any provision to provide judicial system with decent salaries, equipment and staff".

¶4. Pacere cited the January 2008 Goma conference on peace, security, and development as "very important for the country's history," calling it "a key to achieve peace in the country." He also deplored sexual violence against women, especially in South Kivu where "there were as many as 14,200 cases of rapes registered in the provincial health center" during 2005-2007. "Only 287 of them were taken to trial," he noted.

¶5. Pacere is scheduled to submit an annual report on the DRC human rights situation to the UN Human Rights Council March 19 and to the UN General Assembly in October.

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